



Transportation Finance Issues: Local aids

How much money goes toward local transportation assistance?

Local communities receive over one-third of state transportation funds

- Wisconsin ranks high nationally when it comes to returning state-generated highway user revenues back to local governments.
- More than 36% (\$1.65 billion) of the 2001-03 transportation budget is dedicated to local transportation aids and assistance.
- Transportation aids to local communities include funds for local road construction and maintenance, bridge improvements, capital assistance for airports, rail and harbor facilities, flood damage, expressway policing and transit operating assistance.

GTA is the largest category of local aids

- General Transportation Aids (GTA) is distributed to every town, village, city and county in the state to help offset the cost of maintaining and improving the local road and street system. It is the largest category of local aid.
- In 2001-03, GTA had funding increases of 1.5% and 3.5%, a biennial increase of \$22.9 million, for a total budget of \$720 million in the biennium.
- Even modest increases in GTA require significant funding.
- There are two GTA appropriations – one for counties and another for municipalities. There are no administrative funds in program appropriations.
- GTA funds are allocated according to a complex formula that is based on a six-year spending average or a statutorily set rate-per-mile.

- The Kettl Commission report in 2001 acknowledged the General Transportation Aids Program as a good model for intergovernmental aid programs.

Transit aid is among the highest in the country

- Public transit is quite varied in Wisconsin, encompassing large urban systems, van pools, shared-ride taxi service, elderly and disabled mobility and commuter bus and rail service. Local government and private carriers operate these systems, with the state as a key partner.
- The state has funded a share of local transit operating costs since 1974. Today, state aid is the largest source of funding for Wisconsin's 68 public transit systems – covering more than 40% of eligible operating costs.
- Transit operating aids topped \$245 million in the 2001-03 biennium.
- Wisconsin is ranked 7th nationally in the level of state support for transit operating costs.
- There are four legislative tiers of funding:
 - Milwaukee
 - Madison
 - 13 urbanized areas
 - Small urban and rural systems
- When compared to similar-sized transit systems throughout the country, Wisconsin's have been ranked among the most efficient.